

Education Quality Review Pilot FAQ

August 2015 - Webinars

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

SU/SD Configurations

Q: What if my SU doesn't have a high school? Can we ask out of school districts to participate?

A: We're looking for grade 8 or higher, if you have grade 8 then use them; if you have 7th & 8th grade teachers, they will count as part of your team. We really want the teachers to be from the district.

Q: What if we have no secondary schools in our district, highest we go is K-8?

A: We would count the 8th grade as your secondary representation; we're really looking at single subject teachers.

Q: Is there a number limit, are some districts too small?

A: No, any size SU/SD can participate in the pilot, if you have 3 schools, you'll send 9 people total for the pilot.

Q: What if we have two very different sized schools in our district, if we were to bring 3 from each school that would remove too many educators from the small schools, can we participate?

A: Yes, you can participate you don't have to send 3 people from a school; you need to send 3 people per school from the SU/SD as a whole. You'll divide them up: two central office staff members; two principals and two teachers. We're not asking for representatives from your "school buildings", you would need a total of 18 people from your SU/SD if you have 6 schools.

Q: What about the Career Centers, will that count as one of our schools? If our 11-12th graders go to our Tech Center, would we want the same affirmation on how that was going?

A: If the Superintendent requested that the CTE group is included in their review, then the CTE center could be counted as a school. If a CTE has multiple school systems that they work with, they might have more than one review. We encourage Superintendents to communicate with CTE Directors regarding their participation in reviews.

Q: What are the criteria for the visit? When we collect data what is it we are gathering?

A: The criteria are in the 5 major domains of EQS and it is a hefty list – we are looking at how well school systems are providing for academic achievement, personalization, safe/caring learning environments, high-quality staffing and financial efficiencies. In each bucket there are specific items required by EQS that we will observe, listen, read or discuss with students, teachers, leaders, other staff and parents. It is less preparation and length than a NEASC visit but not unlike it in scope.

Q: Are there descriptors for the criteria on the “what we will look for” page? Is there a continuum?

A: Part of the first volunteer group is to help determine what the continuum should include. Right now it is a fairly vague rubric and we wanted to ask input from 1st group to refine

No Evidence of practice located	Evidence that the practice is planned for but not yet begun	Evidence of high quality implementation for some individuals/rooms /schools	Evidence of high quality implementation for most individuals/rooms /schools	Evidence of high quality implementation across the entirety of the school system
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Expectations

Q: What is the time commitment for team members who will be hosting and visiting other schools?

A: Each team member will have two days of training and one day for the site visit. In addition, we anticipate about 10 hours of total time outside the school day related to preparation for the visit. There is also time involved for the host team to prepare for the on-site logistics related to the visit, which we hope will be minimal.

Q: The person that is the Primary Contact, do they need to be at both days of the training?

A: Yes.

Q: Are we volunteering for a visit? To be visited? Or both?

Both – if you volunteer, you volunteer to have others visit you and to have your staff visit them.

Opportunity to Shape Future Efforts

Q: Is there a mechanism within the process for input of development of benchmarks or rubrics? We are interested but are nervous about ambiguity around the targets.

A: Yes, The Integrated Field Review (IFR) is going to be one part of the Education Quality Review (EQR) and be combined with the snapshot. Because the data is not part of this pilot it will not be combined with that SU/SD. It doesn't count this year, it's for Agency development of the process.

Q: Will people have the opportunity to shape the IFR process?

A: Yes. We can design something here inside the AOE, but without the educators in the field input it will not be successful. In September, when we do the first visit, our goal is that the participants will tell us what they like and what they don't like and how they'd like us to shape it. Between September/early October we will have to revise the process based on that group's input. Then we'll deploy in December, the next version of protocol, again – that group of people will tell us everything they like and dislike. Then we'll make those revisions again between January/February and the April deployment and we'll have a third opportunity to gather that feedback. So it is absolutely built into this that the participants will shape the method of review.

In this pilot in particular, we're really looking for people that will tell us what they think about the process however, energy needs to be channeled in a positive direction.

Q: Is the benchmarking going to be done through this process for subsequent reviews? Or will there be one prior to starting or even signing on; some scoring guides of sorts or even a little bit more than the evidence list? How do we know what is good? How good is good?

A: In the beginning stages, we won't know how good-is-good right out the gate without clear guidelines. This is why the early honorarium is higher. It's going to require some conversations and we have a rubric that is designed to assess the degree of consistency of practice across the SU/SD in these areas. The rubric we have is passable but not up to standards, and we're not sure of what we'll see out in the buildings. The goal is, by the end of next year, to have a good rubric that we are proud of as a State.

Continuous Improvement

Q: Is it the Agency's intention that SU/SDs should highlight strengths as indicators from overall SU performance or are we looking for formative feedback, or both?

A: There is no preference, there's a place to grow in every area. If you want to choose the area of strength, that's fine or if you want to choose the area of growth, that's also fine. We believe that most people are likely to identify an area that they are currently focusing on and would welcome

feedback on for growth. Additionally, we believe schools have an area of pride that the SU/SD would like to have validated. There will be a combination of feedback specific to the SU/SD but there isn't specific guidance we're looking for. We want you to tell us what you'd like to see going forward.

Q: Final report – Do you expect that the final elements of the final report will be the basis for the School Improvement Plans for the 2016-17 school year? In the Green Mtn. Star program there's a new format that suggests we can use it this year. In your Power Point, there's a shot of the final report, what is the thinking about School Improvement Plan in the future?

A: Currently the Agency is working on a Continuous Improvement Plan where SU/SDs can have a single document that supports their growth and meets all the federal requirements as well. The Agency wants to build the IFR Report into the Continuous Improvement Plan as required by EQS, the exact details of how that happens is not yet clear.

Q: Is there a way for best practice to be shared after each round? If we go visit a school and they're doing amazing – how is that going to go forward?

A: The Agency is looking forward to the opportunity to highlight and showcase each school system through the EQR process. However, as this year is for vetting the process (not for accountability purposes) it is unclear how we would go about doing that because we're not publishing the results for these visits.

Q: Who writes the report? What is the SU/SDs role?

A: The AOE will write the report on behalf of the team of visiting team. The visiting team will contribute data and comments but the AOE person will do the drafting. Visiting team members will also review the report to insure fidelity and sign a statement of agreement.

Miscellaneous

Q: How do you see the process working on a multi school system and at the SU level? We're used to having an evaluation at a school level, but the idea now of having multiple schools across district and system is new. How will that work?

A: This will be a culture shift for all of us, we're looking at the SU/SD level as the place we'll deliver the information, you'll have some information that helps you know about schools were looking at, but yes we're looking at this as a collective system of improvement not as a specific building feedback. It's definitely a culture shift.

Q: What if two districts that volunteer and get selected to participate in the IFR are considering the merger in Act 46, will the report be written in a way that might inform

our statement about a way to merge our systems like school climate in the 5 indicators out of EQS?

A: If you are a school system that is considering an accelerated merger, you may not want to participate in the pilot as there are so many things involved in the accelerated merger, there may not be enough bandwidth to do both. If you'd like to do both – go for it. Keep in mind that if you start out now as separate school systems, and are then joined through the accelerated merger any individuals that may have sat on each other's review panel would certainly benefit the district with the work that has already been done and what could be combined. We don't want to make the rule that you can't participate if you're doing the accelerated merger but it would be challenging.

Q: Any conversation as to how this will align with NEASC reviews?

A: Yes, there's not a resolution. The NEASC Standards won't work for us; the EQS won't work for NEASC but we're trying to find places where this work aligns so we are working on it. If you have a school going through NEASC this year, we don't encourage you to do the pilot; we think it would be too much. If you think it would be good for practice, and then go for it. We don't want to make double work for you all.